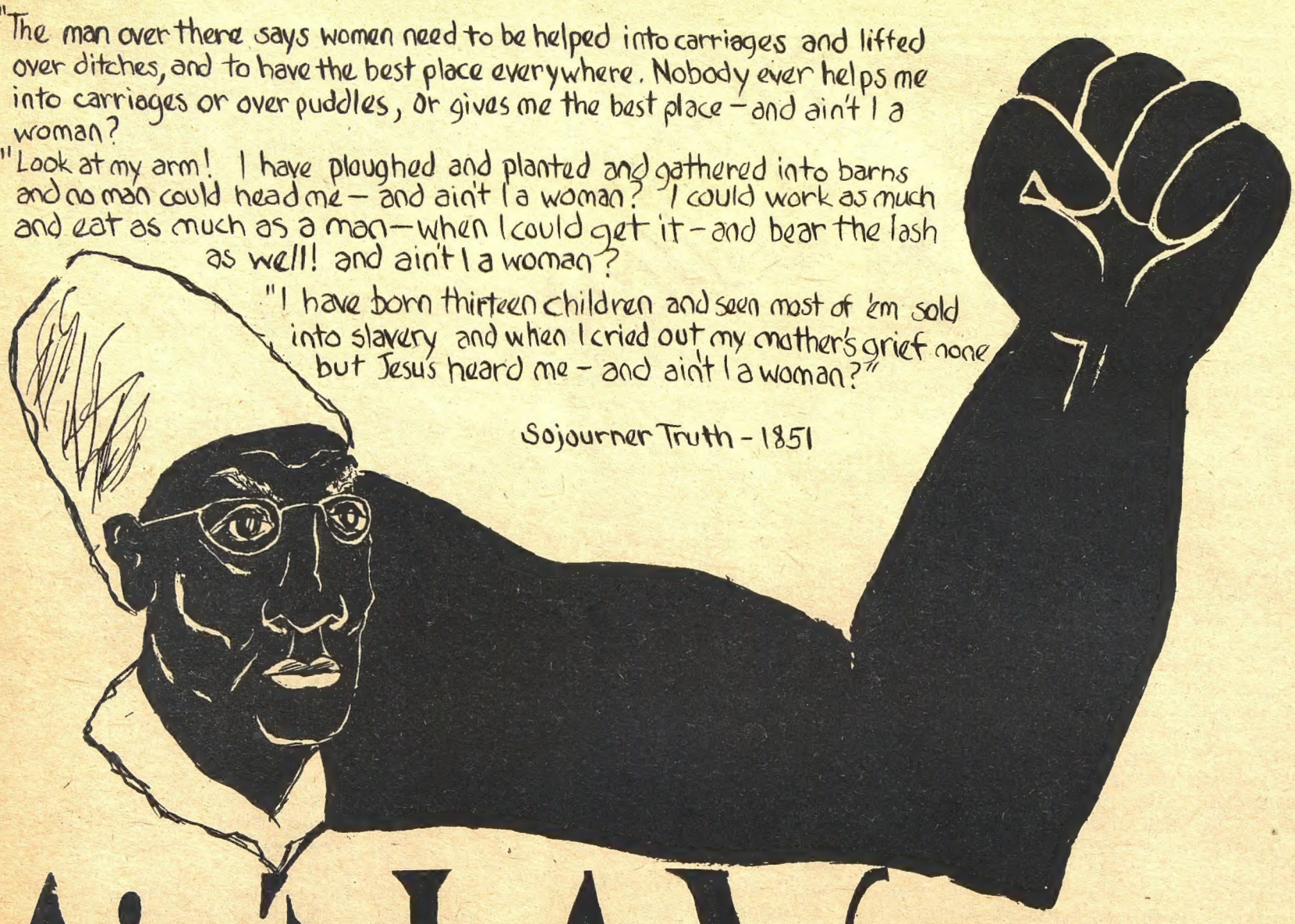
"The man over there says women need to be helped into carriages and lifted over ditches, and to have the best place everywhere. Nobody ever helps me into carriages or over puddles, or gives me the best place – and ain't I a woman?

"Look at my arm! I have ploughed and planted and gathered into barns and no man could head me – and ain't I a woman? I could work as much and eat as much as a man – when I could get it – and bear the lash as well! and ain't I a woman?

"I have born thirteen children and seen most of 'em sold into slavery and when I cried out my mother's grief none but Jesus heard me – and ain't I a woman?"

Sojourner Truth – 1851



Ain't I A Woman?

a midwest newspaper of women's liberation 25¢
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to meet the needs of women

Women are an oppressed majority in this society. Although we constitute 51 per cent of the population, women are only one per cent of the nation's engineers, three per cent of its lawyers, seven per cent of its doctors. Most women have the same job — housewife — despite the individual differences among women.

This society culturally views women as weak, passive, not too intelligent, emotional, maternal, belonging in the home and with the children. And this society trains women to be weak, passive, not too intelligent, emotional, maternal and to be good housewives and mothers. We are not given the training or encouragement needed to pursue other roles. Working women earn less than men doing the same work and, if they are married, work longer hours, since the unpaid household labor awaits them each evening. If they are not married, society views them as misfits.

Women are shown their image as either unpaid household laborer or sex object on TV, in the schools, in magazines and newspapers; they begin to believe in their own inferiority. The position of women in this society benefits the men they clean for and sleep with, the bosses they break strikes for, and accept lower wages and boring jobs from.

We recognize our oppression as benefitting the U.S. Imperialist system just as the oppression of black and third world peoples has benefitted this system, creating reserve labor and resources to be used at the discretion of the rich. A woman, however, can achieve a financially stable position through dependence on a man. We realize that a male supremacist system whose main purpose is to accumulate profit for the few will not willingly grant the following demands. We realize that we will have to take the following, through collective struggle, to form a society that serves all the people.

1. WE DEMAND THAT A SYSTEM OF DAY CARE CENTERS BE ESTABLISHED. These centers should be open 24 hours a day. They must be staffed equally by men and women. They must meet the needs of children and must be controlled by the parents and children who use them.

2. WE DEMAND THAT FREE ADEQUATE HEALTH CARE BE AVAILABLE FOR ALL PEOPLE. Medical attention is a human right, not a right of only the rich. All women must be able to receive free contraceptive devices that are safe, free abortions upon request and adequate care during pregnancy. Research must begin to develop safe contraceptive devices for both women and men.

3. WE DEMAND THAT WOMEN BE GIVEN FREE SELF-DEFENSE AND PHYSICAL TRAINING. Women have not been allowed to grow strong and healthy. Their physical development has been stifled by their socialization into being "ladies." They must be trained beginning at a young age to be strong and capable of defending themselves. The rapes and beating of women will end only when it becomes just as dangerous to attack a woman as it is a man.

4. WE DEMAND THAT WOMEN RECEIVE EQUAL PAY, EQUAL WORK AND EQUALITY IN THE JOB MARKET. Women must be given opportunities for advancement and on the job training. All fields of employment must be open to women, and we must have the opportunity to engage in productive work that is meaningful to us rather than the work which we are now given — subservient, service-type jobs — secretary, hostess or domestic laborer. All people should have work that they find meaningful.

5. WE DEMAND THAT EVERY INDIVIDUAL IN THIS SOCIETY RECEIVE A GUARANTEED ADEQUATE INCOME. To live decently, no individual should have to sell her labor or body. The necessities of life should be supplied free to all people. No woman should have to marry for financial security, nor should any woman be forced to face the degradation of the present welfare system. This income must be based on the individual, not the family unit, and must be enough to allow an individual to live comfortably and decently.

6. WE DEMAND AN IMMEDIATE END TO THE SEXISM WHICH PERMEATES OUR CULTURAL MEDIA. The news and entertainment media, an extremely influential institution in socialization, has consistently stereotyped females as sex objects or domestics. The stereotypes of women in the media today are comparable to the black "shoe-shine boy" of 15 years ago. We demand a stop to this sexism, substituting instead images of women as creative and intelligent human beings.

7. WE DEMAND AN END TO TRACKING IN THE SCHOOLS AND THE IMMEDIATE ESTABLISHMENT OF FREE AND RELEVANT EDUCATION. Relevant education should help individuals to become self-sufficient, self-respecting human beings. Women can't have much self-respect when they never study their own history, when all their examples of achievement are male. We cannot be self-sufficient if we are not given the knowledge for controlling our own lives. We must be given adequate training in useful trades such as carpentry, mechanics, etc.

8. WE DEMAND AN END TO THE DEFINITION OF INDIVIDUALS IN TERMS OF THEIR PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHERS. Individuals should be treated on their own terms, regardless of whether they are old or young, married or unmarried, homosexual or heterosexual or asexual, living alone or communally.

9. WE DEMAND AN END TO THE MARRIAGE CONTRACT which presupposes the submission of the female to the male. Marriage and the nuclear family is the acceptable living situation today. Because of this the single woman is severely limited and children are treated as property of their parents. All people (including the young) must be treated as individuals with individual social and economic rights.

10. WE DEMAND AN END TO THE DISCRIMINATION AGAINST OUR LESBIAN SISTERS. We recognize that this oppression is political, and that it is directly linked to our oppression as women. Women refuse to be defined only in terms of their sexuality and demand to be recognized as thinking, feeling human beings. We refuse to be defined and limited by arbitrary social standards based on unacceptable authorities which suppress human needs common to all people.

11. WE DEMAND THE RIGHT OF SELF - DETERMINATION FOR ALL PEOPLE. There must be an immediate end to the exploitation of women, blacks, third world peoples. All forms of oppression and exploitation must be ended. We demand our freedom as women, but not at the expense of the freedom of other people. Being rich by making others poor, being free by enslaving others, is not worth fighting for. We demand that all people be liberated. Power to all the people or none.

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RISING UP TOGETHER

We wake up one morning realizing we have been blind for 2000 years. We have been deceiving ourselves for so long that the undoing process seems insurmountable. We see that we must take a look at our beginnings, figure out where we are and where we can go.

Women are doing a lot of questioning now. It's a very painful process because we must examine the very core of our natures which collectively form this money-motivated, sexually obsessed, imperialistic nation.

Oppression is a difficult state of mind and body for women to admit to. We tend to take two opposing and equally blinding views. Either we cling to the myth that we are happy in the roles we play, that we do control our bodies and that we can be liberated on our own, or else we give in too readily and sink into depths of self-pity and solitary torture, becoming cynical without knowing it, and robbed of self-confidence. I think the important thing to remember is that the essence of revolution is the struggle for human dignity. I believe that women are capable of unlimited strength which we must allow to surge forth in the struggle.

In order to be strong, we women must carve a place for ourselves where we can listen to ourselves, listen to each other, give of ourselves, and support one another. We are terribly trapped; together we must find a way out. Somehow we must find alternatives to the stifling roles we have been stuck with: the sexual, the economic, the social roles. For too long we have let ourselves take the path of least resistance. We have clung to a self-conception of weakness which only allows us to set limits for ourselves. We need to undergo a mass transformation of consciousness in order to realize that there are no boundaries.

We must give birth to a new morality that figures in the needs of all people instead of conforming to worn-out forms of politics and religion. This new morality will not allow us to copy our oppressors who fearfully grab for power. It should allow us to become angry for we have not become angry soon enough. Only, we must be careful to direct this anger not toward ourselves, not toward our sisters, but toward the enemy.

And we must work together. The fanaticism of individualism has really warped our minds in this society. Somehow we believe that if we do something all by ourselves it is done better. So much stress is placed upon the individual to prove herself, to produce, to be completely responsible for her actions, that we have almost forgotten how to work together. The result of this kind of thinking is that each one of us carries around huge bundles of guilt and futility. We think it is unheroic to admit openly what is deepest inside of us. We have learned to be gratified only on an individual basis. We have forgotten how to take pride in each other's achievements. This is so completely isolating because it teaches us to protect our individual egos and we never learn the gratification of limitless reaching out to our sisters. We are responsible for all women. We cannot rise up alone.

Elsie

AIN'T I A WOMAN? is published on the second and fourth Fridays of each month by the Publications Collective of the Iowa City Women's Liberation Front, P. O. Box 1169, Iowa City, Iowa 52240

AIN'T I A WOMAN?

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You can contribute by sending us articles, reviews, opinions, rages, etc. You can also contribute by committing your women's liberation group to a page, either in each issue or in every other issue. This kind of committment is the best way to make a mid-west paper of AIN'T I A WOMAN? The page can be articles (or any kind of printed material), pictures, drawings, cartoons, poems, etc. Fill it, lay it out; it's yours! Write if your group is interested. We'll send details, deadlines,etc.

If your group wants to receive bundles of AIN'T I A WOMAN?, send 15¢ per copy (minimum bundle: 20 copies) in advance.

Below are some good articles that the Grinnell WLF suggests for you to read:

1) "More of the Same Thing" by Roxanne Dunbar in the third issue of "No More Fun and Games."

2) Radical Feminism and Love" by Ti-Grace Atkinson. Send away to the New England Free Press in Boston or to the Feminists to get this.

3) "The Institution of Sexual Intercourse" by Ti-Grace Atkinson.

Notice:

It would be appreciated if anyone who has information about women's collectives would write to Ain't I A Woman.

From ALBUQUERQUE

AIN'T I A WOMAN received the following announcement from the Southwestern Female Rights Union:

THE SOUTHWESTERN FEMALE RIGHTS UNION HAS CALLED OFF THE WORKCAMP OFFERED THIS SUMMER IN NEW MEXICO, NEAR TAOS.

We talked with a more experienced group of women and decided that we had no right to have a camp in the midst of a Chicano community. It would be like offering such an experience in the center of a Black ghetto in the city; the mountains and cabins only change the setting; the reality of poverty and racism still exists.

We had changed the coordinating of the workcamp from San Francisco to Albuquerque because it was too complicated doing it in two areas. The women in San Francisco have not heard of our decision. We will be sending a detailed analysis of our reasons, as well as a reprint of an editorial from "El Grito del Norte," on the Anglo situation in Taos. If you want a copy of these articles, and/or more information, please write: The Southwestern Female Rights Union, 804 Vassar N. E., Albuquerque, New Mexico, 87106.

"A WOMAN REALIZES HERSELF A PERSON WHEN HER VIEWPOINT TRANSCENDS EGOISTIC INTEREST." (From a statement by Josifina and Sarita, two University of Havana students, taken from "The Youngest Revolution," by Elizabeth Sutherland.)

An Open Reply from the Publications Collective:

Dear Sisters,

We applaud your decision. For whites to meet in the midst of a Chicano ghetto--even in its beautiful natural setting--is racist in the same way that "going slumming" in Harlem used to be. We say used to be, because now that the blacks have gotten it together very few whites would dare do that any more. In other words, the blacks can no longer be treated with the condescension bestowed by a self-designated Superior Race upon their almost invisible "inferiors." Even the most racist whites have gotten that part of the message. And the blacks are no longer invisible.

For militant women to treat another oppressed group as invisible is ironic indeed. The Chicanos of New Mexico, imprisoned in their beautiful setting, are like the woman whose options are mainly limited to childbearing and doing shitwork for the man. Both are in jail; only the jailers are different. Surely we, as radical women, should know this.

By your action in calling off the workcamp, you have reminded all of us of how easy it is to unthinkingly commit racist acts. For this, we thank you very much.

sarah-savage

In marriage and familyhood, wives and children are considered property and are protected by the father/husband "To love, honor, and cherish/protect" I think the feces goes. I'm not sure where these fool men are at, but what makes them think they can tell me what I must call myself? What right do they have? Not only do they tell me what I must call myself, but how many names I must have, and how my name must be written.

As I was getting into the movement, politics and then finally home to Women's Liberation, I became angrier and angrier. As shit hit the fan everywhere I became angrier and angrier. As a result, my new occupation and lifelong goal is to overthrow and totally destroy this sick Fascist society. I'm doing everything I can, whenever I can. And changing my name was one of those insignificant/unimportant (at least to the Pigs in Power) acts I DO to show my total rejection of this society.

I said insignificant and unimportant to the Pigs in Power. But--WOW--it was Beautiful to me. I feel like a new person. After all I went through to change my name, coming out of the courthouse, I started yelling and screaming and laughing with absolute JOY. I felt I was a new person-a new Human Being that I created MYSELF. I had in effect told the Pigs to get screwed, that I chose to change my name, to have one name, and to have all small letters. Coming out of the courthouse I felt FREE--it didn't last long, but what the hell. Anything for a little bit of FREEDOM.

Bureaucracy--In order to change your name in this Fascist society, you either have to be a property holder (FREE holder is the legal term, I think) or get a property holder to sign your form. That's real cool. Your form also has to be signed and sealed by a notary public--twice. It costs $2.00. And you have to tell why you want your name changed. This is all Piggish--designed to make you want to forget the whole thing.

In any case, I trippy-trotted down to the courthouse and asked for the form. The clerk's mouth drops two feet. I get the form, fill it out, get a FREE holder's signature, and go to the notary public for his hallowed seal. He puts on the seal and I went back to the courthouse. When the clerk saw my new name she about passed out. She looked at me like I was some sort of freak. Ha Ha! Right on! She looked the form over and saw the "Why do you want to change your name" blank -- blank. She shoves it across the desk--I write "I like sarah-savage better"--and shove it back. She says, "That's your reason?" I say, "That's my reason." (more on this later) She pores over the form again. She shoves it back at me and says the notary didn't sign his name under the seal, that I'll have to go back and get it signed. Great--I'll be happy to. . . the Pig. In 300° heat I run back, the bastard signs it. I'm back at the courthouse . The clerk looks it over again. "Gosh," she says, "he's got to sign and seal it again. Now what's he thinking of? He knows it's got to be signed and sealed twice." At this point I'm ready to kill both of them. Back to HIM for sign and seal--back to the courthouse. Finally---$2.00 on the desk and my name is changed, but it can't be used in legal matters for 30 days. WOW--PIGSHIT is running rampant these days.

Thoughts on the "Why do you want to change your name?" blank--When I saw that question I pondered what would be the best approach. (After thinking this whole thing out later, I realized I didn't ponder long and carefully enough) I realized that I very much wanted to change my name -- i.e., I had something to lose if I didn't play their game -- this was one of my first PITfalls. So I flippantly wrote, " I like sarah-savage better." I had considered going into a political rap, but decided against it because I didn't want to aggravate the situation any further--and I really wanted my name changed. I also knew lots of Women were seriously thinking of changing their names--and I didn't want to jeopardize their chances. I felt guilty writing BULLSHIT on that blank, but, I felt you had better write BULLSHIT or you won't get your name changed.

That's what happens--when you have something to lose, all of a sudden your back is up against the wall and you start compromising. If I had it to do over again I would go into a political rap on that stupid blank. Women are changing their names right and left around here. I just heard the other day that the Pigs are running out of forms. So what? I have a feeling that if this name changing continues, the Pigs could take some repressive measures so that Women won't be able to change their names. (The Pigs can do anything they want, you know. The law is made to protect the people in power. If the "little people" get out of hand, the Pigs can do anything they want.) So what? If the Pigs do take repressive measures, several options are open to us. 1--Disregard the courts entirely. 2--Take the issue to court. File suit against the county (or whoever it is) for not letting them change your name. If you choose this option, get a Woman lawyer. DO NOT USE A MALE LAWYER. (More on this later.)

On using the legal system--Before going to the courthouse I had debated not going through the courts and just changing my name on my own. If I did this I would be showing my complete disregard and irreverance for the court system. But--I reasoned--and wrongly so I believe now--name changes never seem to stick if people don't get them changed legally. This could be, but it doesn't have to be. Clearly, changing your name through the courts lends credibility to the whole thing. People all of a sudden take you seriously. It's too bad, but that's where peoples' heads are at.

On #2 above--on suing the county for not allowing you to change your name. I'm not really into this, but if that's where you're at, my feeling is that you should make the trial into a carnival. Women could go as WITCHES, Jane Addams, Sojourner Truth, anyone. Make a mockery of their stupid courts. Just don't go into that courtroom trying to prove any point. You may win (at least legally speaking) your case but your victory will be accompanied with more bullshit repressive measures. You know--like you might need 5 FREEholders' signatures and 10 notary publics' signs and seals. The PEOPLE never are given or win anything--the PEOPLE take it. Nothing more needs to be said. Right on Sisters!

In Struggle
In Anger
All Power to All the People
Seize the Time
sarah-savage (or, as I used to be called in the old days, Jan Deahl)

Witching The A.M.A.

About six weeks before the AMA was to meet in Chicago, for its annual convention, the Medical Committee for Human Rights (a liberal-to-left organization of medical people and others) began planning a counter-convention, designed to coincide with the AMA convention and to deal with specific ways in which the AMA is bypassing people's real health needs.

The MCHR invited several other Chicago organizations to help them plan the counter-convention--the Chicago Peace Council (does the biggie rallies), Student Health Organization (younger and more radical than MCHR), Welfare Rights Organization, and others. These groups planned a "three prong attack" on medical institutions, focusing on racism, militarism, and profiteering.

A couple of women from the Chicago Women's Liberation Union heard of the plans and attended the second organizational meeting. "Oh, of course, certainly! The oppression of women, we almost forgot, heh, heh. We now have a four-prong attack...." Even after this, there were a few attempts to submerge the women's issue in favor of "the major concern"---racism. We talked about the necessity of treating the issues together, and were able to convince people that the women's issue should be included not as a part of the broader issue of discrimination but as an issue in its own right, however much it may be connected to the others.

During all of our work with the coalition, Women's Liberation people were consistently more together, more energetic, and surer of our politics than any of the other groups. Over and over again, this surprised us and encouraged us.

The estimates for attendance at the counter-convention ranged from 200 to 600, mostly medical people and many students and health workers. We were given a quarter of the time (we weren't in on the actual planning at this stage) and as it turned out it was the best quarter: from one to three on Saturday afternoon. We decided to write a play rather than give speeches, and then to follow with workshops. Our play idea quickly became a bunch of skits, which are easier to write, easier to rehearse, and easier to make clear points with. The writing was done by a group of about seven, with two of us pulling it together for continuity.

We ended up with nine skits strung loosely together and interspersed with three songs (by a small rock band), very sober walk-ons giving grim statistics, and three witches who would come in at the end of each skit something like a Greek chorus and give a curse or warning. These lines were powerfully delivered and were a good contrast to the women characters in the skits who were usually getting fucked over. After the skit where a woman tries to get her doctor to cooperate in natural childbirth, the witches cackle:

When doctors claim to know what's best,
Make demands----not requests!

After the physical education teacher gives a vague and moralistic sex and hygiene lecture, the witches say:

Get in shape! Learn Karate!
That's the best thing for your body!

And after a parody on the male-dominated hierarchy in the medical world, the witches say:

Women join to crush the system!
Know your enemy and resist him!
Power to the Sisters!

During the planning meeting with the coalition, we never felt quite "in" or fully included. The feeling was sort of like: the women can do their thing from one to three. All the informal leadership positions were held by men. We had no help getting things printed or distributed, and our part in the counter-convention was frequently omitted on posters and in TV talks.

We went ahead and worked it up. When we finally put it on, it was maddening to realize that they were surprised that it was really good. Women cheered and men told us how "clever and attractive" it was. Right after it was over, before we went into workshops, one of the big shots from MCHR came back stage and told us in the most patronizing way that we were great and that we "should definitely" bust into the AMA house of Delegates the next day and put it on for them. It was clear that the MCHR people wanted us to be cute and diversionary in order to disrupt the meeting for them (then they could have a press conference and we would probably get busted.).

A few women were confused by what appeared to be approval of our ideas and praise of our talents; but eventually everyone saw that it was just the same old story: even the men who seem to be on our side will first dump on us and then use us to their own advantage when it seems efficient. We have to be very careful (but not paranoid) and consistent (but not rigid).

MCHR had had a lot of correspondence with the AMA before the convention, asking them if we might be allowed to address the House of Delegates, knowing that we would be refused, but making an overture through the proper channels anyway. Of course they refused, saying our material was not "scientific" or "germane", but they said they were setting up a People's Forum which would meet at the same time as the House of Delegates and would probably draw many doctors who would be interested in various points of view from the community.

We were not visible in an official way at this Forum, which may have been a mistake, because there were several abortion and anti-abortion speakers who had things worked out thoroughly. A group of sisters did a witch action (witch doctors performing last rites over the expired Dr. AMA); the rest of us milled through the audience and out in the halls of the Palmer House Hotel handing out leaflets and rapping with people. At one point a particularly arrogant, obese meatball representing the Society for the Protection of the Unborn started giving an anti-abortion talk (then the doctor pulls out a tiny arm, perhaps still wriggling, torn loose at the elbow") which tried to equate (Dig This!) Women's Liberationists with the Marquis de Sade. From where we were scattered in the audience, we couldn't get him off the stage, so about ten of us finally stalked up to him, surrounded him at the microphone, and just stood there, with our arms folded across our chests, looking and feeling very menacing. Someone started pushing him, and a sister took the mike, and with loud support from most of the audience, gave our position, stressing the idea of voluntary maternity as a basic right.

We didn't know which of us would speak; we all were furious, we all wanted to speak, and yet none of us wanted to; we know now that we all need to work on speaking, on being clear, on being militant. We realized this further when we tried to talk with openly hostile people in the halls. People--many women--were shouting at us: "Who supports YOU? Where did YOU go the last time you needed a doctor? My husband works 16 hours a day to help people and all you're doing is walking around causing trouble and trying to destroy everything we've worked for ...etc." These confrontations were unpleasant and very exhausting, and we left feeling the need for more practice (via role playing?) dealing with basic political and life-style challenges.

t.s. for Chicago Women's Liberation Union

On July 1, an amendment to the Iowa civil rights law took effect, banning discrimination against women in employment, housing, and public accommodations. Among other things, this means that it is illegal to keep any sister out of any job for which she is qualified in preference to a man; that it is illegal to refuse to rent a place to any woman or group of women, just because the owner doesn't want women living there.

Alvin Hayes, the director of the Iowa Civil Rights Commission, says that the state will enforce the new law. Time will tell if that is so. Meanwhile, address any complaints about discrimination to the Iowa Civil Rights Commission, State Capitol Bldg., Des Moines. Complaints must be filed within 90 days of the violation.

MORE BAND-AIDS

New York's liberalized abortion law (no residency requirement, both patient and doctor agreeing to it, and the abortion must be performed before the 24th week of pregnancy) went into effect on July 1. The Village Voice (6/25) reports that there still is confusion about 1) how long the wait will be, and thus 2) how many women will have to pay, not the $100-$150 for a city abortion, but $500 and up to a private abortion hospital because the city facilities are overcrowded.

Abortions may be performed in clinics, according to the Daily Iowan (7/1), but the City's Board of Health says that clinics must be affiliated with hospitals no more than 10 minutes away, and that non-affiliated clinics must have certain elaborate facilities.

Planned Parenthood of New York City has announced it will handle referrals, including those from out-of-state. Their number is 777-4504. Abortion Counseling information & Referral Services(NYC) 212-873-6650 ran an ad in the Village Voice offering to give "information about safe, legal hospital and clinic abortions."

"FREEDOM" TO OPPRESS?

Does censorship really "suck shit?" What exactly do we mean by "censorship?" Is it bad in any form and in every context? Is Free Speech one of our most important issues?

"Censorship" of a newspaper usually implies one or two people at the top of the staffhierarchy- usually a male editor - making decisions as to the content, length and style of what goes into the paper. We need not go into why this kind of censorship is shitty. What is the alternative, though? Ptero's alternative was to allow every individual a certain amount of space to put in whatever she or he wanted to. No censorship, obviously. Why, then, did we and most other Ptero staff leave it to form another paper (High and Mighty)? Because what Ptero had become had completely negated anything good about its "open" and "uncensored" policy. Any staffer had the "right" to put in anything he wanted, no matter how sexist it might seem to the women on the staff, and no matter how contrary to the basic political beliefs of others on the staff. In other words, complete "individual rights" imply the right to screw other individuals. Isn't this one of the worst aspects of our capitalist society, where any one person has the "right" to exploit many other people? Because Ptero was busted so often for pornography - hardly an issue worth getting busted for - we were denied the opportunity of regularly presenting our political views.

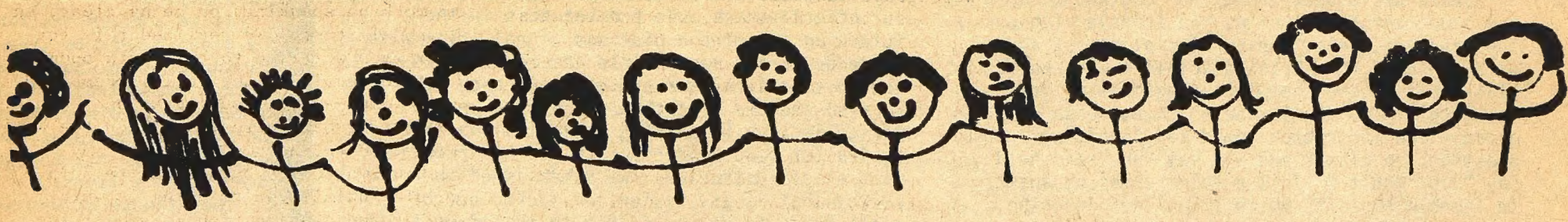
High and Mighty was conceived as a paper with a definite political goal- above and beyond simply "freedom of speech". It operates on the collective principle. This means that each staffer has an equal position on the paper -, everyone types, lays out, writes, sells, makes coffee. Usually "censorship" as such has not been a problem: if there is any question of cutting out an article, or editing one, it is usually because of space problems. The cutting or editing is based on the relative importance and timeliness of the articles in question. There are qualitative judgements made about what goes into the paper, however, because we do have political standards - our politics are, after all, the basis of our paper.

The reason we have gone into the Ptero - High and Mighty conflict is because we feel that the question of the individual versus the collective is an issue crucial to the Women's Movement. We are trying to destroy elitism and hierarchies; we are trying to create a truly egalitarian society. In order to do this, we must work through - we must live in - structures that are free from traditional roles, whose forms are in themselves non-hierarchical. The best way to guarantee true individual freedom - freedom that cannot be used to screw other individuals - is through the collective.

Within a collective, it is necessary for every member to attain all the necessary skills to keep the collective functioning. Only in this way can we stop depending on a few elite leaders to make our decisions, to control our lives! This is especially important to us as women, since it is we who have always done the shit work, and have not been involved in making decisions because we lack the skills and confidence to do otherwise.

POWER TO OUR FEMALE LIBERATION MOVEMENT!
POWER TO ALL WOMEN!

Sally Hamann
Mim Desmond
Former members of Ptero staff; presently working on High and Mighty; members of Grinnell Women's Liberation.



♀ SOLIDARITY! ♀

sit out on the back porch
and cry; cry bitter tears
cause you've been screwed again
cry because you don't have a choice left
it happened again and it will happen forever
you can't get around it, it always will happen
cry because there's no way you can stop it
cry, cry, cry, cry, then cry
because you've been fucked again and you haven't a choice left

it doesn't even hurt in the same way
before it was you, only you that was messed up
now it's not you, it's you and him
you've been a fool, while he's been killing you
you have to hate him, that's the problem
you have to hate them and you don't have a choice left
you hate your mind cause it makes you see it
if only it were possible to get fucked and not see it
cause your world gets smaller when you don't have a choice left

your only choice is to fight them, not trust them
but it hurts to fight those you would like to be
but don't cry now, you haven't a choice left
it happened before, it will happen again
but you're not the only one who has been fucked for ages
so join with them, there's only one way to stop it
now cry, cry, cry, cry! Then fight together
you have to fight now cause you haven't a choice left

--Sally Hamann
Grinnell WLF

We feel it necessary to make clear the fact that the statement of the Grinnell Women's Liberation group in support of the Playboy Ad was not necessarily in support of either Ptero or Nola Express. We don't consider the Nola Express to be the People's Press; thus, we think the ending slogan ("Support the Nola and Power to the People's Press!") of Krys' article to be misleading and contradictory. We as individuals are very much opposed to both papers as they presently stand. Both papers contain material that we consider degradingly and disgustingly sexist.
- Debbie Boardman, Toni Brandmill, Terry Clifford, Mim Desmond, Sally Hamann, Ann Mussey, Susan Preston.

WLF CONFERENCE
Grinnell College November 13,14,15

Please write any ideas you have for speakers, workshops, structure, non-structure to:
Grinnell WLF, c/o Toni Brandmill
Grinnell College
Grinnell, Iowa 50112

THIS PAGE IS FROM THE GRINNELL WOMEN'S LIBERATION FRONT

WATCH OUT! SOMED A REAL C

THE KARATE RIP-OFF

Last fall a few women in Iowa City Women's Liberation took a self-defense class offered by some men from the university karate club. We learned the basic self-defense techniques: snap kick to the groin, eye jab, chop to throat, hammer-fist to groin, and elbow jab. We practiced the snap kick continually because the instructors said it must be instinctive in order to be effective--if you stop to think for one moment it would be too late. Well, we listened to what they said, practiced the snap kick, grew stronger, and became more confident until all of a sudden it dawned on us that we might have to really use it. Even though we were becoming physically strong, we realized that our mental response to an attack would be passive struggling. We would practice the eye jab, but deep inside we thought it was too terrible to use.

Our socialization became clear to us, and as we tried to overcome it, its power over us became even clearer. For months we agonized over the obvious contradiction in our thinking. We couldn't see ourselves responding with force to outrageously brutal attacks against women. We are still struggling with this. Self-defense is a psychological discipline too.

In Feb. these same male instructors began teaching a class in Tang Soo Do, a Korean school of karate. There were 20 in the class: about 4 men and all the rest women, among whom 10 were Women's Liberation sisters.

Karate was a rocky road from beginning to end. One thing alot of us had trouble with was the mindless, male, marine discipline. I agree with the need for strict discipline in a karate class, but it goes completely against my grain to blindly obey a rule for which no reason is given. The instructor would say "Don't ask questions in class" and I'd say "Why" and he'd say "Just don't." This problem comes up again in the big rip-off, which I will now describe.

We came to karate class as usual one evening and were summoned to the other end of the mat by two instructors (hereafter to be referred to as #1 and #2) for a meeting.

#2 said "You read it" and #1 said "You read it" so #2 finally read it. It was a write-up (inaccurate) of an incident that happened when 6 of us in WLF went to speak to a high school in Davenport. We were eating lunch in the cafeteria (two of us were wearing our tobaks so we must have "looked funny"), when 3 boys sat down at an adjacent table and began to heckle us. The heckling centered around the question of whether Anne was a girl or a boy and continued for five min. I was really getting mad because this used to happen to me all the time when my hair was short and I knew how Anne must be feeling. Then the biggest boy (about six feet) who had already made one reconnaissance pass by our table "to get a better look" came up, leaned over to Anne and leered, "Hey, are you a girl or a boy?"

Pat, Phyllis and I jumped up. Pat threw a beautiful kick to his groin but it missed because I grabbed him by the shirt and pushed him back to his own table and forced him down into a chair. I was screaming at him about how he doesn't call Black people niggers because he's scared of them and how he'd better start being scared of women because we're not putting up with this shit anymore. Francie and Anne went over to him after we sat down and tried to talk to them about chauvinism. The big boy asked if Anne would accept his apology. She said, no.

Anyway, #2 finished reading the clipping and started in on a sickening sexist tirade:

Him: (close paraphrase) Now, I've been called a nigger many times which is a much worse insult than this and I never responded with karate. It would be a different thing if I were out with my girl and somebody tried to touch her private parts, then I would have to use karate to protect her. Besides if someone came up and "kicked me in my baby-maker," I would be likely to kill her.

There we were. Supposed to be listening with respect to our instructors who were spuming all that sexist crap. I just couldn't take it:

Me: Just a minute. For one thing you probably have responded physically to being called nigger and if you haven't that's your problem. And another thing, we don't have to sit here and listen to you telling us what is and isn't an insult against women. So fuck it!

#1, who had been staring at the floor with a look of disgust on his face, said "You don't talk back to an instructor."

Authority figures make Phyllis cry, so she got up to leave. I left with her to see if I could help. We held each other and cried and felt totally frustrated because we knew there was nothing we could do. We wanted to learn karate and they held all the cards.

When we finally got back to the meeting, #1 was telling us that we were only orange belts and that we could not give any more karate demonstrations without him. We mentioned that it was politically important that women give them alone. He said, no. That was that.

We went to a local restaurant to reconnoiter We decided that I shouldn't have gotten mad and Phyllis shouldn't be upset because it reduced our effectiveness. To prevent this in the future we invented a distress signal (fist with thumb up) which means close the ranks so we are physically closer and can help each other! We also decided that the only weapon we had for collective bargaining against #1 was his desire for good students to build his reputation as an instructor. We established the policy that if any sister got kicked out of class for outside use of karate that didn't meet the approval of the instructor, then we'd all walk out. But if a sister got kicked out for a breach of discipline during class we would remain in class and teach her out of class. (We compromised here because we feel it is necessary for women to learn karate.)

We came to our next karate class armed with these plans to find that we had been ripped off. All the qualified male instructors refused to teach us for various reasons. One said we didn't realize that it was a privilege to learn karate. He was in a class where the instructor used to knock people out while they were at attention to see how long it took them to get up. It was a privilege to be knocked out. Another said he would not teach people who would do anything so "disgustingly subhuman" as wear their tobaks into a bar. One said that karate was his religion and we had violated it by not knowing innately where to wear our tobaks. #2 gave us back our quarters for the board we didn't get to break, and we left.

(You know what I think? I don't think it was religious at all. I think it was the groin kick. Dig it.)

We thought that that was the end of karate because we felt we needed an instructor to make us work. With some doubt, therefore, we started holding a class every night from 5:30-6:30 at Wesley House to teach other women what we know and to work out. We've found that collective teaching reduces the inherent elitism in teaching and makes the class less stratified.

Still, we really need to learn more karate so if anyone is inclined to develop a mail order course we'd appreciate it.

FEMALES AND SELF-DEFEN

The ever increasing rate o against women has prompted v papers to issue warnings and male readers. We are warned after dark, but if we must ve advised to carry alarms, mace enticing clothing, and of cou so some passing man will come

The crimes against women a pression of the pervasive att women. While some of us have treme, all of us have been su "harmless" forms--being handl hooted at. You don't treat a that. Any female not under t is "free game." If she's not she's public property.

We have depended on males The right to protect is also is time that all females lea

Males are taught how to ta while growing up. Females ar this right. Our culture does velop strength. Girls are r things. The result is that w The psychological consequence significance. Women feel the they need a man to protect th

Women's physical weakness consequences can only be over their bodies. Of the various karate enables you to become c physical potential by teachin whole body. Only when we hav that comes through developing excercising it, will we be ab mobility.

It is a basic and immediat be given access to free self- dividual women should not hav defend themselves. It is not Women should demand that free be provided by towns, schools departments...all institution over women's lives.

The attacks on women will as dangerous to attack a woma another man.

Pat Galli
Delpfine

(Reprinted from No More

AY YOU MAY MEET
ASTRATING FEMALE

ISE

of the traditional crimes
omen's magazines and news-
offer advice to their fe-
not to go out unaccompanied
nture out alone, we are
, nailfiles, to avoid
rse if attacked--scream,
to our rescue.
re the most blatant ex-
itude of men towards
not experienced the ex-
bjected to the more
ed, whistled at, pinched,
n equal human being like
he "protection" of a male
private property, then

to "protect" us too long.
the right to oppress. It
rn to defend themselves.
ke care of themselves
e systematically denied
not allow women to de-
ot supposed to do physical
omen are pitifully weak.
s are of even greater
y *should* be weak, that
em.
and its psychological
come through developing
forms of self-defense,
onsciously aware of your
g you to mobilize your
e gained the self-confidence
our physical potential and
le to gain any individual

e necessity that all women
defense instruction. In-
e to pay to learn how to
an individual problem.
self-defense instruction
, businesses, welfare
s which have direct control

stop only when it becomes
n as it is to attack

gan
Welch

Fun and Games, issue 3)

THE SISTERS REACT:

Taking karate seemed to dramatize a certain recurring situation I find myself in. I often feel in the position of powerlessness. Enraged at being in that position but feeling it so strongly I generally cry. In karate, I felt this really intensely when we had to spar (free fight)--completely weak & powerless. There was no way that I could win. The only choices I seemed to have were in just what manner I would take my defeat. This was just too super a symbolic inaction of what I have too often felt in my lifetime. I also am very small (height & bone structure) and no matter how much better I got at blocking I felt battered & because of a physical factor over which I had no choice. I spent many classes trying merely to get thru the class without crying. Then one night I felt really brutalized & weak & all that crap & I was about to cry when I got really mad & wanted to hurt back. I realize that is not the answer but it felt a lot healthier than wanting to cry. It seemed like a beginning & I really started to dig karate.

When the shit started to fall I felt pretty disappointed at the thought of no longer being able to take karate, but my other reactions were much stronger. I felt, despite all the terrific, mystical, martial arts reasons that our instructor had, under all that it was a plain old political act. Political women scare people, especially men, & he wasn't so different from most men. I also had that feeling I always have when someone is giving all these logical reasons for controlling, confining & dominating someone. There are no acceptable reasons for doing that to anyone. I often let someone do it to me but not because it is sensible to do it, but I give in because I am still very weak. Each time I do, I hate a little more--hate the person in authority, the situation, & myself. I didn't want any of that this time. I've been through it before.

Very soon after I joined Women's Liberation, I joined the karate class. I wondered if an all-women group could get together in their heads enough about doing these violent actions which all our lives we learned were not really socially acceptable for a woman to do. At first most of us were a little uneasy about the potential roughness, but very soon, I think, we began learning that we can train our minds & bodies to make use of the anger that is in all of us. Considering the very legitimate reasons for that anger, I found it easy to understand when a sister who had always been gentle & sensitive around her sisters came at me with the ferocity of an unleashed panther. I felt proud of my sisters & myself for being able to show & use the anger & aggressiveness that we as females had for so long kept tucked away somewhere because society called it "unfeminine". Karate teaches us to feel good & confident about our own ability to use our anger in self-defense.

Sometime during karate (when I was beginning to get really bruised every night I guess), I began to get very uptight about the male structure of the class. The whole thing was reminding me of what I've always imagined boot camp to be like. The structure was very stratified & authoritarian. The instructors were all male (the only female green belt quit coming after the first week). The students were mostly female. A combination of being most severely hurt by the men in the class & being in an authoritarian structure which forced me to be subservient to the male instructor made me think that an all womens' class must be much better. While in Boston I visited one of Jayne West's womens' classes to try to find a difference in atmosphere. I was surprised to see that the women were tougher in her class without men than in ours with men. Jayne's class structure was just as authoritarian & the women obeyed her orders much more quickly. They used each other as targets for kicks & actually made contact just like we did (which was bruising me so much). I think her atmosphere was less jovial, more hard work together than our class was. Jayne said that she believed karate could be taught best & safest in an authoritarian way, with belt ranks, etc. My personal conclusions were that I was probably getting more upset about men filling the top places of the structure than I was about the structure itself which I still haven't been able to admit is necessary.

One thing really bugs me about karate--the mentality that seems to prevail among the male teachers. To wit: karate is an end in itself, an entire lifestyle, a total mind-rearrangement, a secret, sacred martial Art. Puke! I don't want to turn into a goddamn cold-blooded vicious killer. Yet conversation with our former karate teacher after the rip-off convinced me that that's his view of the people who will ever be any good at it--i.e., if you can't develop this mentality you might as well not bother taking karate & if you do throw yourself into learning the Art, you'll inevitably develop the authoritarian, emotionless personality to go along with it. You need to be able to think of the most expedient means of achieving a goal and then do it, in cold blood. Group action is a farce; the way to get rid of corporate power,e.g., is systematically to wipe out the corporate exec.s in their beds--ground glass in their tapioca, no less. Kill a person in a crowd with a quick invisible punch to his/her vulnerables, & walk away blithely, secure in your competence. Rip out your opponents eyeballs, groove on his/her writhing. Never never let yourself get angry, because emotions blind you to the most effective way of wiping out an opponent in any given instance. This is the path to the Good Life??!!!

Is the urge to become strong, self-sufficient, competent women able to defend ourselves from the attacks of The Enemy compatible with karate as institutionalized in this country? I wonder.

today is thursday
evening and we, my brother and i, got turned away
from our karate class by the goon squad at u of i
atheletic building because we had no ID cards like
the students coming to see the game...then we
suggested they go ask the instructors
NO YOU NEED AN ID
so we should have run up the stairs to our sisters
screaming here come the pigs GET THEM which would have been
beautiful (& which we will do at the next game)
but instead we screamed obscenities and retreated ungracefully
EXTREMELY UNGRACEFULLY and waited for a friend to walk in
the door who never did
so we came over here & you're not home.
love to our sisters
death to the establishment & pig cops
sincerely,
ginna

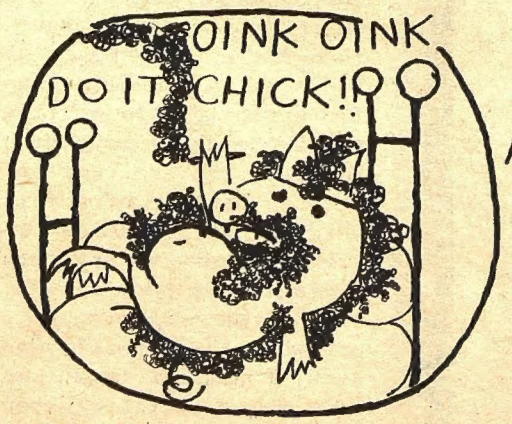
a Woman?

Muckin' with the Media

THE MEDIA

The two articles below are reprinted from the June 5-19 issue of RAT.

love & revolution to the RAT sisters & all sisters who forcibly prevented a video-tape "fuck-in" from being shown at the recent conference on alternative media



ALTERNATIVE MEDIA?

Some of us from the Women's Center, RAT, and the Women's House of Detention Bail Fund became aware only a few hours before the taping, of the appearance of two of our sisters from the Radical Feminists on the Dick Cavett Show with Hugh Hefner. At the time we were greatly concerned with bailing out Dionne Donghi before she would be extradicted to Buffalo the next morning. We questioned why the women wanted to appear on a show with Hugh Hefner. It seemed an obvious setup designed to turn debate into entertainment with total disregard for the gut issues of women's oppression and with total lack of seriousness for women's liberation as a political movement. Our contention was and is that there is no point to a discussion with a sexist system's symbol of rich man-pimp, hero-worshipped and successful for making his macho off the backs, tits, and asses of women. If at all, the only way to appear with Hefner, it seemed to me, is to treat him symbolically, as an enemy — to use the forum as a means of drawing out of him blatant remarks about his feelings towards women. In this way we could reach women in the immediate and remote audience. However, few of us are together enough to be able to pull off such a confrontation. And there are understandable reasons why women are powerless in such situations.

The show, like every other institution, was male-structured, and run in such a fashion as to force the women on the panel into play ing by men's rules to communicate about their own oppression. It is difficult enough for a woman to confront a single man in an intimate relationship with her own feelings, and even more difficult for a woman to see herself as strong, articulate and serious enough to speak before an audience. Furthermore the glamorous and frightening TV image depends on personality for the projection of ideas, and on the ability to talk and respond to two males well-prepared and versed in their roles. The odds are clearly against the woman.

We felt a solidarity with the women as our sisters and we went to the Cavett studio to support them, but also to ask for their support. What we wanted support for was our decision to use this opportunity to confront Hefner with a demand for reparations — reparations owed us for his abuse of women as sex objects, reparations to be used for the women's liberation movement, and specifically for the bail fund. This demand did not contradict our total disrespect for all Hugh Hefner is and represents nor our belief in the necessity of ultimately offing him and the state which encouraged his exploits. We felt that at least by making this demand at the beginning of the show, an exposure of the gut issues would have to follow.

We telephoned and attempted to personally contact the two women scheduled for appearance. However, they were nervous and turned on to their TV appearance, feeling quite cooperative with the show and its aims partly because of the "niceness" of the woman, a Cavett employee, who had helped them get on the show. The women listened to our plans but agreed only to think about what we were going to do. They did not offer any tangible support.

The women's liberation contingent was treated as prelabelled freak extremists, as we had feared and expected. We were seated in the balcony without access to the stage. We were zeroed in on by male ushers hired to keep us from making extreme remarks and spontaneous comments. "Please," the ushers pleaded, "don't make trouble for us."

Our strategy became to get onto the first floor and at appropriate moments direct our voices, criticisms, and demands to the stage. We hoped afterwards to be brought onto the stage with the help of the women panelists. A lone sister, among the bunnies and their escorts who filled the first floor, was right on target with her well-placed comment: "You have been exploiting women, and we demand reparations." Sisters in the balcony and other women on the first floor joined her in yelling at the stage. The two women on the panel said nothing.

Later three of us tried again to reach Hefner and make our demands. During a commercial we tried to get onto the stage. A rush of ushers tried to keep us off. Again there was no response from the panel women, although we were barely 15 feet from them. There were scattered women's voices shouting, "Let them speak! Let them speak!" This action continued as the show went back on the air. A pig was called in to force the lone woman in front off the stage while ushers dealt with the others. We had no intention of getting arrested. To call attention to what was being done to us, the woman shouted out to the audience and over the air: "They are using guards and pigs here to drag us off for speaking, for asserting ourselves. This is a fascist country."

Hours later, after we left the theatre, we heard of the repudiation of "those militants" by our sisters.

It is wrong to blame what went down simply on the media. The media helped set the conditions and was destructive in bringing out our own divisiveness. We must make clear however that there are differences between us, and that these differences are serious political ones. Once the need for revolution for change is accepted, debate with the enemy is seen for what it is — futile, liberal engagements that tend to confuse and lose sight of real issues.

Paraphrase of old Chinese proverb
Good almost anywhere in Amerika

Women who lie down in dungheaps
Get up covered with shit.

On Tuesday night, May 26th, two sisters shared the stage with Super Pimp Hugh Hefner on the Dick Cavett Show while I sat there ag onizing for them and for the Women's Movement. This is the second time two of our sisters have dignified Hugh Hefner by appearing with him. A thoroughly bad move to begin with, it was compounded by the fact that the two spokeswomen, Holly and Diane, sat expressionless while their sisters called out from the audience and got dragged away by the pigs. When several of our sisters who had come to the studio called out to the stage, the only one on camera who responded was Dick Cavett—he threatened to throw them out and he did. Throughout this confrontation, Holly and Diane stared blankly off into the distance as if they'd been hypnotized by the bright lights. It looked like a parody of legendary female disloyalty. The all-too-familiar triangle—man on top, women divided below—was being glorified for the nation. It felt even more lousy than usual just sitting at home, watching it happen.

Holly and Diane ignored their sisters in favor of a word with their oppressor. The result of much conciousness-raising fell to pieces in the face of male oppression, and at the very least the image of female unity that we strive for was sacrificed. It just didn't do no good to ask sexist pigs to grant us their approval. We've got to think of better ways to get the word out.

I've heard some good arguments for abandoning the use of the male-dominated media altogether. We shouldn't see the kind of public confrontation that took place Tuesday night as a fair challenge when it always takes place on their terms and on their turf. But if circumstances were different—if we controlled the variables—we'd be reaching a lot of women who want to be reached. The interviewer, if not a woman, should at least be sympathetic and serious. We owe it to ourselves never to get defensive. We have a right to indignation. We have a right to be humorless—we're not entertainers. It's obvious we'll never argue our way to freedom on prime-time TV. Therefore, we've got to stop the male-dominated media from absorbing us. If we don't, we run the risk of remaining a dirty joke that elicits the uncertain laughter of defeated wives and girlfriends. As long as we continue to be intimidated nation-wide, women will continue to be dominated at home. Nights like Tuesday night fail women and set the struggle back.

Ain't I A Woman and many other publications by sisters around the country began as we felt a need for alternative media. We have to communicate without the constraints of the pig press where we've always had our page for recipes, fashions and advice on how to please a man.

Working conditions in the pig media demand that any woman who works there must accept a male definition of what women are and should be. Women who work as reporters work for the Man. Usually the man with the most contempt for women sits as their editor. Little wonder that the women survive by seeing themselves as exceptions.

The only thing that appears in the pig media for women is propaganda in its worst form, glorification of the social stereotypes that keep men happy and ridicule, vilification or pity for the women who don't live up (down) to those stereotypes.

Well, women in WL try not to live that way, but those reporters keep coming and we keep talking to them. Now we get women reporters but only because we refuse to talk to the male ones. We should learn from that. We don't need the pig media to sustain Women's Liberation because the pig media didn't create Women's Liberation.

Two ideas the media wouldn't know how to convey even if those ideas didn't so offend the values of the media pigs are that WL is made up of women who (1) are serious in a challenge to male authority and (2) like other women. Put those together and they're too much. And when WL women take part in media events they can make neither point. The constraints of the situation women have accepted won't allow those points to be made.

How can we believe any woman is serious who would sit to discuss her oppression with Dick Cavett and Hugh Hefner? The best that women can expect from such a situation is to come off as funny bunnies (or, more likely, strange pieces of ass).

So how do we get out of the Step-'N-Fetchit era with the media? (Because that's just where we are.) Surely not by working through the pig media. We work in other ways, through local WL groups, through our own media, until the pigs like Hefner and Cavett are afraid to enter the same room with WL women in the same way pig racists fear the very presence of Black Panthers.

Letters From Mother -

Saturday being beautiful
I washed all the bedding
And even aired pillows

Father played golf
That was good. However
He had a headache
Sunday but helped me
Finish cleaning your room
I still haven't gotten
To Kay's. It will be
A full day's job
Doing it all alone

Sunday it rained
The entire day
So I was glad

There's the wedding
On the 12th

I was so sure
There'd be mail
From you today
None came
Kay was coming home
And changed her plans

This year again
I put up Indian
Corn at the side
Of the front door
Six ears of lovely
Corn! Yesterday I
Caught the culprit
A squirrel has eaten
Two of them clean and
Is well in two more
When he is finished
I'll just take it down
I suppose

It's a beautiful day
Warm in the sun
Air is cool. We
Did a little shopping
This morning which
Included new glasses
For father
Thank goodness

I met Karen Beymer
And her new baby who
Is walking now
I held Fritz so
She could pet him

Time to get busy
I miss hearing from
You this week

I hope you make a
Point of getting rest
Even though you study
Late and have coffee
To keep you going
The Purdue football
Coach just came down
With hepatitus

The garage is painted
A man is coming about
New doors. Kay will be
Home this week-end
Father cut his hand

Mail is scarce
These days no
Doubt you are
busy

Rain rain
Now colder weather
I hope it stays dry
This week-end so
The painting is finished
And we do the storm
Windows. We're so late
This year. The man didn't
Come to see what we
Need for garage doors
Maybe this week-end

It gets so lonely
To stay at home
Even as busy as I am
The days seem long
I know my needs are
Changing as I never
Felt that way a few
Years ago

I plan on working at
Home every Thursday
Before the Holidays

Of course the
Wedding will mean
A trip into town!

On Tuesday I saw
Danny Clark. He's
The greatest kid
He's going to make
Some girl a great
Husband. Anyway he was
Driving by going to
Pick up his mother and
Stopped to talk to me
He's at Fort Rucker
Alabama and luckily
Didn't pass some exam

So he's in the office
Doing clerical work
Like making out checks
He's home because his
Father's in the hospital
Danny said the storm
Windows weren't up and
He's full out of paint
He said to say hello
to you

Kay was home
Came with some
People I didn't
Meet. One boy
Carried her luggage
I defrosted steaks
And baked a pie
For dinner. She
Asked if they could
Eat. Nothing happened
Saturday they
Slept all day and
Sunday a concert
And back to school
So Monday I made
Beef stew out of steak

Where will you
Be on your
Birthday?

Liz Brauer

COMMENTS on elitism

Following is an excerpt from a letter in the June 11 issue of It Ain't Me Babe. The meeting with Roxanne Dunbar & Martha Atkins of the Southern Female Rights Union took place at Berkeley.

...Roxanne spoke about the importance of dealing with racism in the women's movement. She criticized abortion repeal and claimed that for WL to exert energies in this area was to water down the black movement. Unfortunately her position was unclear and inconsistent. Although she insisted that she was not advocating the reduction of WL to a support group for the black revolution, in fact, her position contained the seeds of just such a strategy. Oppression, she told us, had to be dealt with on it's most basic level--life and death. Black people faced with genocide are the most oppressed group in America today. Legalized abortion would be used to further such genocide. "What are our individual lives (white women dying from illegal abortions)" she asked "compared to the genocide of a whole people?"

Roxanne touched on issues that call for a lot of thought and discussion, issues vital to the women's movement. Yet, in this letter, I want to focus on other than the content of what she said. Before, I noted that Roxanne presented an inconsistent position. I came to that conclusion after I left the meeting. Sitting there in that audience, something very different was on my mind. "Why am I so stupid?" I thought "Why can't I follow what she is saying?" Yet if it had been someone other than Roxanne Dunbar standing up there, saying what she was saying, I would have seen quite clearly that the thoughts were not holding together. Other elitist nasties kept coming into my mind as well--When other women in the audience expressed disagreement with what Roxanne said and then she replied to them, who did I listen to more carefully? Who did I credit with the most authority? Whose decision seemed more important? I confess, it was ROXANNE who I listened to and expected answers from, stupid me who was afraid to raise her hand & ask a question,afraid of being thought silly or...

Deja vu. It was just like being at a Leftist meeting dominated by Movement Machomen in days gone by. Now just how did this happen?

First of all,Roxanne's meeting was structured in such a way that she was made to appear as an authority. She sat in front in view of everyone. She & Martha spoke at will, the rest had to raise our hands and painfully wait (some women had hands raised for an hour without being called on) to be recognized by them. Audience members were allowed one or two questions at most, Roxanne (and Martha, but not to so great an extent) talked after every question. I suppose the media factor was there too, us peons confronting our famous leader and theorist (who we read about in Newsweek and Time.)

I don't know what we can do about media produced celebrities in our movement, but I feel the authority trip that went down at Roxanne's meeting was potentially very distructive...

"Don't follow leaders
watch your parking meters."
-Mary Marvel

(Reprinted from the June 5-19, 1970 issue of RAT. The Feminists is a New York WL group.)

THE FEMINISTS has always paraded itself as a leaderless group - that is, a group of equals. Despite this the media has consistently portrayed Ti-Grace Atkinson as the group's "leader"; "spokeswoman" and "theorist". How could this happen in a group that professes to use the lot system for everything?

Our group *does* choose by lot for all tasks including contact with the media. Ti-Grace, however, separated her activities as a member of THE FEMINISTS from her appearances in the media as an individual expressing feminist ideas, the latter not subject to the lot. This accounts for much of the publicity she has received while a member of THE FEMINISTS.

There is a belief in the Women's Movement that it is necessary to cooperate with the media in allowing them to publicize certain indiviudals as this is the only way to spread ideas and effect change. We think that this belief is not only wrong, but it is also extremely dangerous. The media need stars; the movement does not. The important thing for us is getting our *ideas* across as free of individual personalities as possible. We don't want women to enter the movement as somebody's follower; we want everyone to contribute equally to her own liberation.

The media uses stars for the very purpose of making ideas seem unimportant, just part of the show. Rather than appealing to reason, the star system nourishes and feeds upon an unfortunate characteristic of oppressed people - the need to look to someone else, to accept things on authority rather than trusting oneself. The result is the "cult of personality", hero worship, the dependency of the leader/follower relationship.

Realizing this, THE FEMINISTS passed the APRIL THE FIFTH RESOLUTION which reads as follows:

Because the aim of THE FEMINISTS is revolution for *all* women and equality among all human beings;

Because this revolution will be accomplished *only* through the collective mind and energy of women working together rather than individualistically;

Because we believe that "feminist ideas" arise out of the common condition of women and are not therefore the exclusive property of any individual;

Because we see the creation of "media stars" as contrary to the aims of our movement since it puts forth individual personalities as the originators of ideas and the source of inspiration rather than each and all women in common;

Because we believe that the dissemination of feminist ideas is the work and responsibility of the groups of the movement and that these groups are therefore entitled to make political decisions about the use of the media;

It is therefore resolved that *all* contact with the media on feminist issues by a member of THE FEMINISTS is to be decided upon by the group and chosen by lot. Any exceptions to the above must be approved by 2/3 of the group in advance.

Anyone who violates this rule will be held accountable to the group. Anyone who flagrantly or consistently violates this rule will no longer be considered a member of THE FEMINISTS

ADDENDA: Any member of THE FEMINISTS who appears on the media is to be identified, if at all, as a member of THE FEMINISTS and not personally. The group is to decide if exceptions are to be made to this rule by a 2/3 rule.

Two days after the resolution was passed Ti-Grace Atkinson withdrew from the group. Her reason: the resolution is "wrong on principle."

THE FEMINISTS is the first group in the Women's Movement to bring up the principle of equality within our group. Our position on this issue is based on the assumption that the apparent inequality in accomplishment and talent among individuals is not innate but results from inequality of opportunity and life situation.

To allow unequal treatment by the media is to dilute the force of the principleof equality within the Movement. Only concrete action gives credibility to an idea, makes it an issue and raises it above the level of mere rhetoric. Our resolution is a declaration that THE FEMINISTS intend to act, and not just talk, in accordance with the principle of equality and to keep this issue alive in the Movement.

COMMENTS

The two articles appearing in the current issues of RAT & IT AIN'T ME BABE signify, I think, a revolt by sisters all over the country whose names we don't know against the heavies--the names we do know. There are two sides to the issue (and maybe more) but as a movement we can choose only one direction. The question of equality--whether we need or want leaders--is a crucial one, for in a way the decision we come to will shape the core of our politics.

I feel a great deal of compassion for the heavies. They have devoted a tremendous amount of time & energy to a movement that they are totally committed to & it must be painful to have that movement dump on them.

I am really impressed with the Feminists' Resolution & I respond with a real understanding to Mary Marvel's reactions to Roxanne. Most of us would because most of us will never be like them--will never speak as well, be as well known, and the idea of equality sounds pretty good. I wish I could talk to Roxanne or Ti-Grace about this issue. I doubt the result would be much. I know I would feel intimidated & would most likely accept what they said because I really believe they are more intelligent than I and would go away accepting their analysis even if it didn't feel comfortable to me. A lot of times I still find myself not listening to valid ideas because they are not well presented--meaning they are not presented in a style that I have been conditioned to think is intelligent--cool, et al. And I question whether someone's ability or fame should be the determinate factor on how much they have to say about their life and what affects it.

I can understand the argument that equality often means dragging everyone down a few notches--in effect keeping those with great abilities from using them--from growing. I don't want anyone kept down but I contend that in a leadership/follower relationship the follower is the one who is most likely kept down & there are more followers than leaders. Being a follower doesn't do a hell of a lot for your self esteem. The only thing you gain from the bottom half of a power relationship is hatred generally more toward yourself than those above.

Any elite that develops will just from the advantages of that position gain more experience & receive more information than they would if they were not in that position. I don't think that the dynamics of a structured situation change depending on who is involved. When I attack leadership I do not attack Roxanne. I don't want to destroy any leaders or followers, I just don't want those roles to exist anymore.

In order for them not to exist we must work within new structures. We really do not need to use our names when giving speeches or writing articles. Gaining individual recognition for speaking & writing of course seems important. We have been conditioned to need recognition for being better in something & women have not been spared the desire for this recognition, just the recognition. I still want lots of money, a big car, a big house and never to have to work but don't anybody give it to me unless it is given to everyone. One person achieving means just that: one person is achieving and there are millions of us. The articles still need to be written, the speeches need giving, the struggle has to be waged & although one may not receive notority for having done so, if we win the rewards are high--freedom for everyone.

Usually tied to complaints about elitism is the notion that no one can tell me how to run my movement. But that kind of movement exists only in one person's head--it's not a movement, it's a cry of pain. If we are to be a movement we must deal with problems like racism. We must find out if our actions on abortion repeal are so ill-conceived as to threaten black people and what we can do to assure that the means to our freedom isn't at the expense of other oppressed groups. Given American history we would be fools to dismiss any questions about black genocide.

Agreed that we have to quit expecting answers from experts. I strongly disagree that the question "What are our individual lives compared to the genocide of a whole people" is inconsistent or unimportant. It would appear inconsistent only to a white woman. The question is a brutal reality in the lives of black women.

The seeds of many strategies exist in WL. I'm worried about the seeds of a racist strategy which exist when white women say "no one can tell me how to run my movement."

Indeed, deja vu. The old suffrage movement blossomed & grew when white women claimed a need for the vote to cancel the pernicious effects of giving the vote to black men.

OUT OF THE CLOSETS & INTO THE STREETS

Gay & Christopher St.
I am your worst fear, I am your best fantasy.
I am a lesbian. I am beautiful
GAY is mmmm GRROOVY
your daughter is marching with us. —Lavender Menace
LESBIANS ARE LOVABLE
Sappho was a right on woman!
Hi mom!
WOMEN turn on to your beautiful sisters!
You don't have to be gay to like one. SISTERS UNITE

This weekend several sisters went to the Christopher Street Gay Liberation Days in New York City, the first birthday of the Gay Liberation movement. One year ago, when the Stonewall, an after hours gay bar in NYC, was raided, the homosexual community reacted with open anger and violence against their oppressors. Since that time gay women and men in over 300 cities have discarded their life style of closet schizophrenia and are developing new consciousness.

We stayed at the Lesbian Center (also known as the Church of The Holy Apostles) which was provided by women from Lesbian Liberation, a new coalition of gay women who found they weren't allowed enough freedom in the male dominated Gay Liberation Front.

On the first day of the celebration there was a workshop on Lesbianism and Feminism or as it was called by some The Place of Feminism in Lesbian Liberation.

On Saturday evening gay women gathered at the center for a communal supper. We had a conversation with two women from Daughters of Bilitis, a national homophile organization, who had just returned from Bettendorf, Iowa where they talked to women there about starting a chapter of DOB. The thought that there are 100-150 women in Bettendorf interested in coming together is really exciting. Right-On sisters!

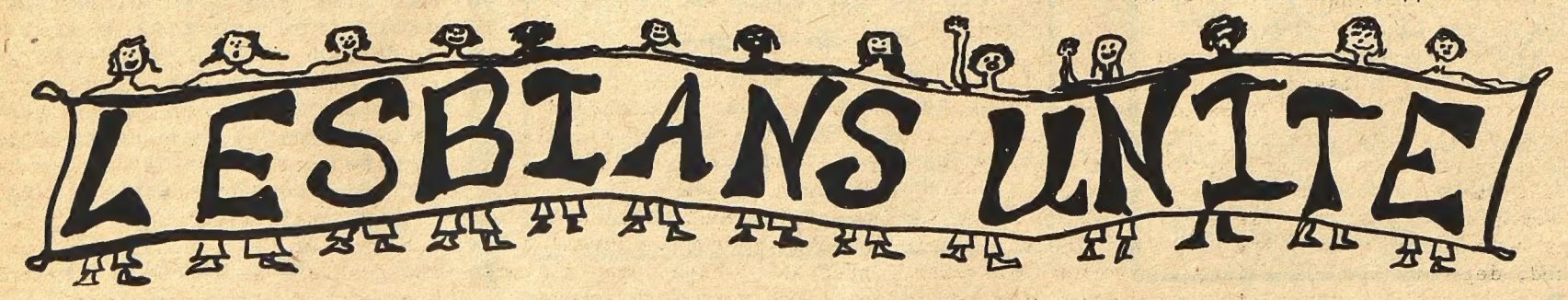
We also met four sisters from Washington D.C. and discussed two divisions between people: Male/Female and Gay/Straight. We mostly agreed that the biggest gap was female/male and that gay women should only ally with gay men in so far as the relation remains unoppressive, however, one GLF woman, who strongly hopes the Gay Liberation Front doesn't split along sex lines, thought that gay people who feel a common oppression must stick together to fight it.

Politically we found ourselves more or less together with the sisters from Lesbian Liberation. However, the All Women's Dances on Fri. and Sat. nights pointed out to us how differently we relate socially to each other in the midwest. We never dance with each other because there are no places in Iowa City where gay women can be together. It was so beautiful seeing women dancing with each other and meaning so much to each other. Coming as total strangers, we also were involved in the feeling of community giving us the impression that it was the fact that we were women and human beings and not close personal friends that was the basis for this affection. We were wondering if the reason we could express our feelings for each other was because we weren't inhibited by social taboos that keep women apart. These dances are a defiant political statement by all who dance: We will love whom we please!

On Sunday there was a triumphant march of thousands of homosexuals and lesbians up sixth Ave to a Gay-In in Central Park. We marched arm in arm under a banner of Lesbians Unite and chanted: "Out of the closets and Into the streets" to the imprisoned onlookers.

The meeting Friday night was entitled "The Lesbian in the Feminist Movement" and was to me one of those sad experiences where people divide themselves from one another either due to misunderstandings or alienation. I think both of these factors entered into this meeting. The gay people had gathered to discuss their reaction to Ti-Grace Atkinson who had spoken to the Daughters of Bilitis the night before. The fact that Ti-Grace had not been able to deal with lesbianism, and for that matter many other women in the feminist movement, caused a great deal of hostility to appear. Gay women felt that Women's Liberation people were more concerned with day care, equal job opportunities, and a general equal respect status that is now occupied by men. They want to work toward this, and still live with a man. Thus, as the gay women see it, Women's Liberation is for straight, married women who will continue to stay straight and married. The needs of the lesbian don't coincide with these demands. Gay oppression both legally and socailly is of their utmost concern. Straight women in women's liberation still being unable to deal with lesbianism aren't any different than any straight women who take part in the oppression of other women. Therefore many of the gay women don't want to ally or work in any part of the feminists movement. Also the concept and structure of role playing in the gay world was come down on extremely hard by the feminists. This attack of life style alienated many of the women, one because that was the way they dealt with living and combatting their own oppression, and two because they see that married women also revert into their own form of role playing which they call security. This struck many of the gay women as being hypocritical.

As I sat there as both a lesbian and feminist I felt a real sorrow and hopelessness that this division had to occur. Perhaps it is inevitable and imperative that lesbians decide between the two movements. However, at this point I don't see that it is. Lesbians are women, and by definition an intricate part of women's liberation. They are women who do not need men and therefore are removed in their personal orientation from the male dominated society. They are also strong women who have lived with an obvious and blatant oppression for the entire extent of their sexual life. Lesbians have experienced women's oppression simply because they don't need men and haven't been "protected" by being treated as a privileged sex. The oppression of women loving women is a powerful political tool. If women can live without men than they cannot be dominated by them. And when male dominated society prescribes that women cannot love women, it is merely using a technique of all oppressors, divide the oppressed and they will always be weak. Women who have been taught that lesbians are sub human, that they are perverted or inferior are merely placing the values of the oppressors into their own heads and thus reinforcing the divisions among all the oppressed women. This is why it is imperative for all women to deal with lesbianism, with homosexuality where the primary love both emotional and sexual is directed toward a person of the same sex. It is not good enough for straight women to say that they do love women and then turn to give their ultimate love to their oppressor.



Women's Collectives Bring us Together

In the interest of bringing women together and in an attempt at experimenting with communal living several sisters in Iowa City have formed an all women's collective. We're hoping that living together will do several things. First, by pooling all our incomes we can free some of the sisters from oppressive work so that they can do full-time worthwhile work. Also, living together makes us physically close, enabling us to study together, work together, share the shit work, and to share the exciting moments together. We formed the collective hoping that it would be a place where all our sisters and us could come to get ourselves together and eventually find alternative life styles and philosophies for the future.

We have lived together in a large house for just about one month. There are six sisters who actually live in the house and two more sisters who will join us in the fall when they return from traveling. Two of the sisters help organize and run the two free day care centers in Iowa City. Other sisters in the house help at the day care centers and work full-time at straight jobs. All the money that people earn is pooled together. Sisters contribute anything from a full month's salary to food stamps only. This all goes into either our household kitty or our checking account.

Thus far the collective has made several structural decisions. First, we have regular closed meetings to discuss issues or problems at hand. This is a time when we have been conciousness raising. At first we thought that having closed meetings may have been an elitist thing to do. But in the interest of experimenting with a small core of the same people we decided that it was necessary. Also, we have decided that there will be no men in the house. This decision was made in the effort to support the goals that we have made for ourselves. If women are truly to get themselves together then they need someplace where they may go and always know that the open arms of a sister await them. We think of our house as a place where married sisters, high school sisters, and all others may come to talk if they have problems or to have fun if they need to get away for a while. It has been difficult to not allow men in the house, because there always seem to be those exceptions. However, the rule of never any men in our house has established an atmosphere to the house that we all agree is wonderful. It is very important that we do not become co-opted on this point. We also decided that there will be no dope in the house. Especially these two decisions came after a large discussion on how disciplined we want to become.

As previously mentioned we had decided to have collective meetings at least once a week. We usually try to scheduale collective meetings on a night when there are no cell meetings and as often per week as we can. Initially these meetings were mainly concerned with very basic functions of the collective. For example, we had to discuss how housework, money, meetings, cars, etc. were to be taken care of. However, we also began to discuss theoretical issues such as sisterhood, loving women, elitism, self-disciline, group protection, pigs, etc. All of these discussions led to consciousness raising. In the future we hope to have special periods of time set aside just for consciousness raising.

The household responsibilities have been divided so that two people cook every evening meal. and two people do the pots and pans after each person does their own dishes. We all eat dinner together at seven o'clock, and usually there are many other sisters who sit down to eat with us. The weekly cleaning is done on Saturday when two sisters plan the meals for a week and buy the groceries, two do all the laundry, and two plus any other sisters who come clean the house. These jobs are rotated each week, and no one is ever left to do anything by herself.

We've not had a lot of time to really become as close to each other as we hope to become. Thus far many of us have been out of town frequently. However, in a month's time we have definitely become much closer among ourselves and to the many sisters who spend a lot of time at our collective.

Economically, women's collectives are highly desirable. A single woman has much harder time than a bachelor. She receives less pay for more and shittier work, insurance companies', the government's and other institutions' policies make it harder financially to be single. However, if the woman marries, she fits right into the capitalistic system of economics. She can be written off as a "dependent" or an "exemption." A collective with other women would be less expensive since costs would be shared. The collective would be an institution (a new institution in society!) and as such, could buy food etc. more cheaply.

Women, by forming their own collectives are saying two things at the same time; "Fuck men" and "Up with the new revolution."

In saying "Fuck men" the collective points out that women's oppression exists today and will continue to exist unless women learn to depend more upon each other and less upon men. In the collective women would live together, acquire knowledge of their own strength, and constantly reinforce each other's efforts. In co-ed collectives it has been all too easy for women to assume the traditional roles of cooking, cleaning, etc. In a woman's collective women would learn to make repairs, keep the car running, make furniture, etc.

More importantly however, in a woman's collective women would learn to look to their sisters, not men, for approval. This will come about through living together which necessi tates decisions and actions that will reinforce strengths and confidence.

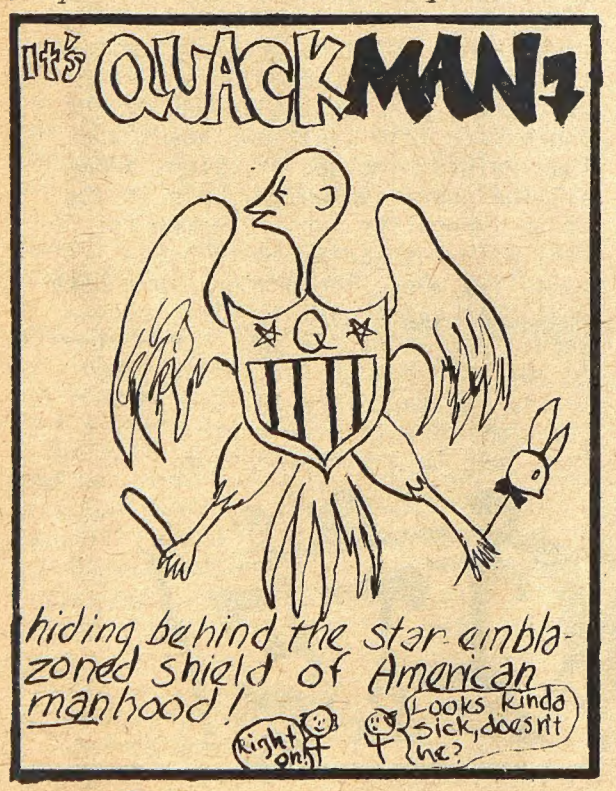
If the idea of women's co lectives sounds threatening, is; to men. Women are making definite political move whic puts pressure on the men to overcome their male chauvanis Women are saying our oppressi will not be passed over in th revolution as it has everywhe else. (In Cuba and China they slowly working out women's eq lity.)

Further, women are saying there will not be another rev tion unless women's oppressio ended. Women's collectives ar start at getting women to dep upon each other and a start t relieve oppression, both of w will be necessary achievement women are to be liberated in forth coming revolution. In f the liberation of women in th revolution insures that it wi be socialist or communist as and female roles and relation ships are destroyed.

Learning to stop competing with our sisters and to start lying upon them will be impor lessons in the commune. Once trust, rely upon, and love ea other it will give us faith a strenth to convince other wom (because they really are wort our time and effort) and to s males from oppressing us. We' love and receive strength frc each other in our struggle to fect a revolution which must erate women in order to be su cessful.

Up with women's collectives!
Power to the sisterhood!

Grinnell



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